



American Citizen Bulletin September 2011

Welcome to those who are new to the Beijing consular district! There are two holidays during the month of September when the Embassy will be closed: Monday, September 5, Labor Day and Monday, September 12, Mid-Autumn Festival. For your planning, please also note that in October the Embassy will be closed October 3-5 for Chinese National Day holidays, and on October 10 for Columbus Day. Please go to <http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/as092508.html> to make an appointment for routine services.

WARDEN MESSAGES PHASED OUT

The name "Warden Message" has been retired. There are two types of messages which the Embassy will now send to the U.S. citizen community:

-- ***"Message for U.S. Citizens"*** contains voting news, announcements of out-reach trips , and other non-emergency messages.

-- ***"Emergency Message for U.S. Citizens"*** is an important message containing advice for the resident community, such as alerting U.S. citizens to demonstrations, a political crisis, an impending storm, a natural disaster, or a terrorist attack.

ABSENTEE VOTING INFORMATION

Although there are no federal elections in 2011, remember the comprehensive source for how to vote abroad, including state by state information, is the Federal Voting Assistance Program's website www.fvap.gov. Register ahead of time and plan on making your voice heard from overseas.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

The ACS website (<http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/acs>) has an updated list of law offices in the Beijing consular district that are willing to accept U.S. citizens as clients. The list includes Chinese law firms as well as American law firms with a presence in China. Most of the firms listed specialize in commercial law, but many are qualified to offer services on a full range of legal issues.

TRAVEL TIPS

- ✓ **Sign up so the Embassy can better assist you in an emergency:** Record your travel plans or overseas residence online at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. This will help us contact you if there is a family emergency in the United States, or if there is a crisis

where you are traveling. In accordance with the Privacy Act, information on your welfare and whereabouts will not be released to others without your express authorization.

- ✓ **Sign your passport, and fill in the emergency information:** Make sure you fill in the emergency information page of your passport. Write the contact information in pencil so you can change it as needed over time.
- ✓ **Leave copies of itinerary, passport data page, and credit card when you travel:** What happens if there's an emergency back home while you are traveling? Leave copies of your itinerary, passport data page and visas with family or friends so you can be contacted in case of an emergency. Leave a copy of your credit card too; in an emergency, the credit card company may help your family locate you.
- ✓ **Check your overseas medical insurance coverage:** Ask your medical insurance company if your policy applies overseas, and if it covers emergency expenses such as medical evacuation. If it does not, consider supplemental insurance. Medical treatment and evacuations can cost thousands of dollars.
- ✓ **Familiarize yourself with local conditions and laws:** While in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws. The State Department web site at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html has useful safety and other information about China and other countries you may visit.
- ✓ **Take precautions to avoid being a target of crime:** To avoid being a target of crime when traveling, practice the same safety tips you would in any place with which you aren't familiar: do not wear clothing or jewelry that attracts attention and do not carry excessive amounts of cash. Also, do not leave unattended luggage in public areas and do not accept packages from strangers.
- ✓ **Contact us in an emergency:** We are here to help you in emergencies. Consular personnel at U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad and in the United States are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to provide emergency assistance to U.S. citizens. You can reach us at (10) 8531-4000. Contact information for other U.S. Embassies and Consulates is listed at <http://travel.state.gov>.